

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 4079

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS MO

SUBJ: VERDICTS ANNOUNCED IN CASABLANCA TRIAL

1. CRIMINAL COURT IN CASABLANCA, IN SESSION SINCE JULY 30, ANNOUNCED ITS VERDICTS IN EARLY MORNING HOURS OF SEPT. 2. OF 81 YOUNG RADICALS ON TRIAL, 30 WERE SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT AND CONFISCATION OF PROPERTY IN ABSENTIA; SIX PERSONS SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS; THIRTEEN TO 10 YEARS; ONE TO 8 YEARS; SIX TO 5 YEARS; TWO TO 18 MONTHS; AND ELEVEN TO SUSPENDED SENTENCES. COURT ALSO ACQUITTED FOURTEEN PERSONS. MOST OF DEFENDANTS HAVE BEEN IN POLICE CUSTODY SINCE MARCH, 1972. AMONG THOSE SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS WAS ANIS BALAFREJ, SON OF FORMER PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF KING HASSAN AHMED BALAFREJ, WHILE ABDELAZIZ MENEHBI, LAST PRESIDENT OF BANNED STUDENT UNION UNEM, WAS AMONG THOSE SENTENCED TO LIFE IN ABSENTIA; DURING TRIAL DEFENSE LAWYERS CLAIMED HE LAST SEEN IN POLICE CUSTODY.

2. COMMENT: SENTENCES ARE ONLY SLIGHTLY LESS HARSH THAN THOSE REQUESTED BY PROSECUTION, AND APPEAR OUT OF PROPORTION WITH GRAVITY OF OFFENSES AS REVEALED BY TESTIMONY. DEFENDANTS MADE NO SECRET OF THEIR LEFTIST POLITICS, BUT PROSECUTION DID NOT
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PROVIDE CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT THEY INVOLVED IN VIOLENCE.
FOR EXAMPLE, YOUNG BALAFREJ WAS ACCUSED OF POSSESSING EXPLOSIVES

WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE FIVE LITERS OF GAS AND OIL HE CARRIED IN CAR.
STATE'S CASE FURTHER WEAKENED BY ITS REFUSAL TO PRODUCE THREE
POLICE INFORMERS ON WHOSE TESTIMONY ACCUSATION THAT ACCUSED MADE
UP THREE INTERCONNECTED SUBVERSIVE ORGANIZATIONS RESTED.
VERDICT LIKELY TO HAVE UNSETTLING EFFECT ON CLIMATE IN STUDENT
CIRCLES DURING COMING SCHOOL YEAR.
ROCKWELL

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